

It is to be hoped that every reader of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will take the time to peruse what Mr. Rowell recently wrote, particularly since he is the chairman of Governor Olson's Compulsory Health Committee, and presumably speaks with authority on the plans of the Administration, and also of the Committee and the other proponents of a compulsory system for California.

Having been present at speeches made by Mr. Rowell before the Commonwealth Club, having read many of his articles on the subject, having heard him and his supporters at the April 19 meeting in the Assembly Chamber at Sacramento, and listened also to the Administration's spokesmen when the "41 against" and "33 for" vote was taken in the Assembly on Tuesday, May 16, we confess that we were somewhat surprised on reading some of the statements in Mr. Rowell's article of May 20, referred to above.

Thus, the assertion:

"The only practical issue, therefore, was which way the vote of the people should be taken, and the Legislature has determined that it shall be by initiative."

Such a statement by Mr. Rowell must be construed as nothing else than one of editorial license. As a matter of fact, the Legislature made no commitment concerning an initiative, and did not vote on such a procedure. What took place was this: the Assembly indicated, by a vote of 41 to 33, that the compulsory health bill, as submitted in amended form on May 16, did not have its approval. What the proponents of the measure may have had in mind as regards an initiative was a matter not before the Assembly or Senate for vote.

The comment of Editor Rowell, in the paragraph immediately following the above and on the possible nature of "radical" and "conservative" initiatives, is of special interest, in that it seemingly indicates that these proponents are determined to force a vote on some kind of compulsory health law—whether good or bad, elastic or frozen, presumably not being in their minds of much importance. Remembering the expostulations heard from some of the advocates on the humanitarian needs of a compulsory capitation system, the "inhumanity" of forcing forthwith a possibly inelastic and harmful measure, with dire results to the very citizens whom they claim need more adequate medical care, certainly is indicative of inconsistency by such advocates. The attitude of some of these proponents seems to be that, having committed themselves to a certain type of compulsory health insurance, they are determined to bring the matter to final and immediate determination, without regard to whether there is urgent need therefor, or whether their much-amended and emasculated measure (for vote-getting purposes, supposedly), as by them expounded, will fulfill its exploited purposes. The thought comes to mind that there is here involved a certain amount of personal egotism by some of the propositional supporters. Certainly the issues at stake should transcend the will to be successful in the purely political battle.

Did space permit, one could continue with other exceptions to some of Mr. Rowell's statements. Members of the Association may well take the time to read the clipped excerpts in this issue, not only of his news, but of those of others. Their perusal will make for better presentation of the subject, when its various phases are taken up by physicians in the weeks to come, with both discerning friends and patients.

CALIFORNIA'S NEED FOR A BASIC SCIENCE LAW

California Has Three Examining Boards.—California is a State of "multiple examining boards." That is, it has legally authorized three different examining boards for healing art practitioners:

1. A board for nonsectarian practitioners holding the degree of Doctor of Medicine;
2. A board for the sectarian group known as Osteopaths; and
3. A board for another sectarian group catalogued as Chiropractors.

A third cultist group that has been knocking at the legislative doors for years is that whose members call themselves Naturopaths. This year, those belonging to this sect have put up a particularly strenuous fight and they may be counted upon again to present their statute in the 1941 Legislature asking for legal recognition.

In the present unsettled state of the public mind, common to lawmakers and the electorate, it is a question whether such a law, that would give necessary legal recognition by California to a third cultist group, could not, in the near future, go on to passage and enactment!

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California Needs a Basic Science Law.—Which suggests, again, the great need of a Basic Science law for California—a subject that has been repeatedly commented upon and advocated in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

Such a law, to be of value in California, and to ensure application to existing healing art examining boards, and any that may come into being in the future, must be enacted by initiative vote of the people.

Several drafts of a Basic Science law, adapted to California's requirements, have been made, and have been submitted to the Council. The Council, unfortunately, at several state elections was not in position to authorize action, partly because of the expense involved—about thirty thousand dollars being needed for the educational campaign and to secure the more than 200,000 signatures with precinct allocations, identified by notary. Other factors, also, have operated to postpone action, as when, in the November, 1938, state election, the antivivisection initiative was deemed of such paramount importance that the Council was again obliged to forego submittal of the much-wanted initiative.

It has been shown that in the commonwealths in which such statutes have been enacted there is a

better maintenance of healing art standards, and that therefore Basic Science laws make for real conservation of the public health. In California, most of the component county societies, and also the great majority of members, have expressed their approval of a law as proposed; and the 1940 state election ballot should include a Basic Science law among the initiative measures which will then be submitted to the people for vote. It is our belief that it would receive a most favorable vote of the electorate.

C. M. A. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

Action of the House of Delegates.—Rapidly changing times are apt to create new and imperative needs. For the first time since the reorganization of the California Medical Association in 1902, its House of Delegates, in annual session assembled, has deemed it necessary to levy a mid-year special assessment upon the members. From component county societies in different portions of the State, resolutions for such a purpose were presented by their respective delegations; and both purpose and scope of the contemplated "public health and welfare" work received earnest consideration before the reference committees and in the House.

The text of the resolutions adopted by the House of Delegates, and other informative material have been sent to every member of the Association, and in this issue of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL the minutes of our legislative bodies chronicle the action that was approved. Obedient to the direction of the supreme legislative body of the Association, the Council has issued instructions to carry through the mandate of the House.*

CONCERNING "INITIATIVE LAWS" ON THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL HORIZON

Three Proposed Initiative Laws.—Whether they wish it or not, the next two years will place before the physicians of California proposed legislation, having to do with medical practice, which cannot be indifferently thrust aside. Every physician, then, who fails to meet his obligations merely places on the shoulders of his fellows an increased burden. This thought should be taken to heart by every medical licentiate in California.

What are these initiative problems?

1. The initiative for a revision of the Chiropractic Practice Act, which will be on the ballot of the special state election as early, perhaps, as next October.

2. The Compulsory Health Insurance Initiative. Such an initiative has been threatened by the proponents of a compulsory health insurance law, both before and since they failed to secure such legislation at Sacramento. If the special state election is not held until October, the advocates of a compulsory health insurance statute may be able to secure the necessary signatures for an initiative in time for placement on the ballot. Other-

wise, it will probably appear on the 1940 state ballot.

3. Basic Science Initiative. The California Medical Association House of Delegates has instructed the Council of the Association to arrange for the placement of such an initiative on the state election ballot. The regular election in 1940 will precede the next legislative session in 1941. A Basic Science law could well wait, therefore, until November, 1940, for submittal to the electorate.

The above measures have not only a momentous relation to scientific medicine, but an even more intimate connection with the economic phases of private practice. No M.D. licentiate in California, therefore, but has an important stake in the legislation noted above.

Component county societies are urged to give these matters their very earnest attention. Bluntly phrased, it may be stated that, for the time being, these measures transcend discussions of scientific topics, no matter how intriguing the latter may be.

CALIFORNIA PHYSICIANS' SERVICE

Gratifying Registration Under C. P. S.—The large registration of members of the State Association for California Physicians' Service is a widespread evidence of the earnest desire of doctors of medicine to make possible adequate medical care for all social groups of the State; and in keeping with its known policies, CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE has endeavored to promote this C. P. S. organization work by giving generous space to commendatory articles that have appeared in California newspapers, such press items usually reflecting, in many ways, the current thought of the more than six million human beings making up the population of the Golden State. To afford this extra space has naturally meant an increase in both the folios and the expense of their printing as part of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL. The issues at stake, however, are of such great importance that the additional costs seem negligible and justified.

The reports at the Del Monte annual session from officers of the California Physicians' Service and heard by the delegates representing the component county societies have no doubt, by this time, been transmitted by the delegates to their local colleagues, who will have learned that California Physicians' Service is moving forward as rapidly as the conventions of safety in procedure permit. Members may certainly rest assured that the officers of C. P. S. are alert to their grave responsibilities, and that full information will be sent to all physicians as soon as certain fundamental requirements are met.

C. M. A. WELCOMES A NEW COMPONENT UNIT

Inyo-Mono Counties Medical Society, the New Addition to the Fold.—Years have elapsed since a new county medical society has been welcomed into the fold of component units of the California Medical Association; this because the

* In this issue, see page 446, Item 11. For Official Notice, see page 426.